

Media Interview Guide

Tips to Remember

- The key reason to do an interview is to get *your* message out.
- Know your “key messages.”
- There is no such thing as *“off the record.”*
- Know your audience. Speak to their level of understanding.
- Anticipate the tough questions and prepare your responses.

Before Your Interview

- Ask Scripps Communications staff about the program/publication/reporter.
- Wear conservative clothing. Avoid bright, busy prints. Avoid solid white.
- Be friendly and approachable to the reporter. Establish a comfortable but professional rapport.
- Everything you say is *“on the record.”*

During Your Interview

Consider *Your Look*

- Maintain a pleasant, positive look. Smile, as appropriate.
- Maintain direct eye contact with the reporter. Look at the reporter, not at the camera.
- Do not nod. (A nod can be distracting; a nod can be misinterpreted as agreement.)
- Use hand gestures sparingly; keep hand movements close to your body.

Consider *Your Thoughts*

- Respond at your own pace. Don't feel rushed.
- Think before responding.

Consider *Your Answers*

- Let the reporter completely finish a question before answering.
- Begin a reply by restating the question. Avoid replying with “yes” or “no.”
- “Sound bites” are real. Use short answers first, then elaborate as needed.
- Answer a negative question with a positive response.
- Correct inaccurate information immediately.
- Don’t let a reporter put words in your mouth or lead you. If misquoted, correct the error.
- Don’t “over answer” to fill a silence.
- Use “Scripps,” not “we.”
- Avoid using scientific jargon or acronyms. (Say Scripps, not SIO.)
- Don’t dwell on an awkward or negative question. Respond with your key messages.
- Avoid speculating. Do not respond to “hypothetical” situations.
- Feel comfortable saying “I don’t know.”
- Never say “no comment.”
- Never lie to a reporter.
- Stay calm and enjoy yourself.

After Your Interview

- You are ***“on the record”*** until the reporter leaves the room.
- Provide the reporter with appropriate background materials.
- Thank the reporter.

The Scripps Communications Office is happy to help you prepare for an interview.

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